



Mayors Call on World Leaders to Reach Ambitious Climate Commitment in Paris *Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities at the forefront of GHG reduction actions*

Toronto, ON, Friday, December 11—Mayors from eight states and two provinces representing over 17 million people called on negotiators in Paris to reach agreement to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions to levels that will limit the global average temperature increase to no more than 2 degrees Celsius, and 1.5 degrees if at all possible. The board of directors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative met in Toronto where they adopted a resolution that called for the temperature rise limit at COP21 and also highlighted the GHG reduction commitments of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence member cities totaling almost 30 million tonnes of equivalent CO₂ (CO₂e) by 2020.

“There is much goodwill at COP21, but this must be translated into a binding global agreement with an ambitious target,” said Mitch Twolan, chair of the Cities Initiative and mayor of Huron-Kinloss, ON. “Even a temperature rise of two degrees leaves many island nations and low lying coastal areas in jeopardy. We must strive to reach farther, faster.”

The average North American produces 16 tonnes of CO₂e per year. The collective GHG reduction targets of 31 Cities Initiative members has already reached 28.6 million tonnes of CO₂e, representing over 6 million of gas powered cars off the road for a year. These reductions will be reached at the local level through investments by all orders of government in public transit, non-carbon energy generation, electric vehicle infrastructure and energy efficient retrofits for buildings.

“We, cities and towns across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin, are demonstrating leadership in reducing GHGs by setting our own reduction targets,” said Cities Initiative vice-chair Denis Coderre, mayor of Montreal, “We must reduce our dependency on carbon based energy, to protect our communities and to keep the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence ecosystem vibrant and healthy.”

While Great Lakes and St. Lawrence mayors make a difference in their own backyard, they are collaborating globally with the Compact of Mayors to join forces with cities around the world to combat climate change. The Cities Initiative participated with 446 mayors and 640 cities in the Climate Summit for Local Leaders in Paris on December 4th, 2015 hosted by UN Special Envoy on Climate Change and Cities Michael Bloomberg and Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo.



Over 400 cities globally are part of the Compact. The Cities Initiative has 17 members already committed to the Compact of Mayors, to set GHG reduction goals, compile an inventory of emissions, achieve reductions, and monitor and report results. The Cities Initiative will continue to encourage more members and non-members to join this global-local movement.

“The Compact of Mayors shows where real change is occurring-with cities leading by example. I am proud to have my own city of Grand Rapids and the Cities Initiative join forces with hundreds of other cities that recognize the critical urgency of combatting climate change at the local level,” said George Heartwell, mayor of Grand Rapids and long-time member of the Cities Initiative board of directors.

The Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of 119 mayors representing over 17 million people. Together they work to protect, restore and sustain the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. For more information, go to www.gslscities.org.

Media Contacts

David Ullrich
Executive Director
(312) 480-6501

david.ullrich@gslscities.org

Nicola Crawhall
Deputy Director
416-407-5880

Nicola.crawhall@rogers.com

Scott McKay
Program and Policy Manager
(Quebec)

(514) 618-0297

scott.mckay@gslscities.org